



## TWO DECADES OF TURMOIL AND PEACE IN MIZORAM

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**Abstract:** Mizoram is the new name given to the hilly areas earlier known as Lushai Hills. After annexation by the British in 1890, priority was given for formal education and preaching of Christianity. The missionaries formulated the Lushai alphabet and as the time slipped on it created a class of educated people in Mizoram. They were successful to convert the entire populace to Christianity within five decades of their occupation. After India got independence, this region remained isolated, neglected and underdeveloped. It is a general perception that the Mizos had a separatist feeling even before occurrence of famine or mautam in 1960s. In 1961, the Mizo National Front (MNF) was formed under the leadership of Laldenga, and in the subsequent years MNF waged a war against the Govt. of India resulting in loss of many innocent lives and sufferings of the common people. The Govt. of India, on the other hand used an iron hand to crush such uprisings, it declared 'Disturb Area', imposed Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA), used air force and put villages in a cluster or grouping. In 1986, the Govt. of India and MNF signed a peace deal; it was termed as one of the most successful peace agreements in the history of India. The role played by the church leaders to bring peace in the state is commendable and appreciated by one and all. Mizoram enjoys peace but pursuit for development is not without hindrance. In this backdrop, both the centre and state government need a proper planning for development of the state and to maintain a lasting peace in Mizoram.

**Key words:** Missionaries, Insurgent, Church, Grouping of Villages, Mizoram Peace Accord.

### INTRODUCTION

The Mizo were originally known as the Lushai, though now they prefer to call themselves Mizo as the term generally includes all the sub-tribes of Mizo hills. Mizoram is the new name given to the hilly areas earlier known as Lushai Hills. Mizoram is sandwiched between Burma (Myanmar) in the East, Bangladesh in the west, and on the north are the Assam and Manipur. The Mizo live in a close-knit homogeneous society and with no class distinction and there is no discrimination on the ground of caste or sex (Lalkima 1997). The origin of the Mizo tribe had been a subject of baffling solution. In the absence of a written history it was difficult to trace the origin of Mizo very far with accuracy at all. However, the folk tales and



songs did throw some lights (Ai Rui). Rev. J.H. Lorrain, the pioneer missionary observed that the ancestral home of Mizo would appear to have been somewhere in between South-East Tibet and Western China (Rev. Hminga 1987). As such any conclusion reached on the early history of the Mizo is open to argument because till now it does not have any historical backing (Sangkima 2004).

## **COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION**

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the increasing of number of Mizo chiefs by generations, their land became too scarce to accommodate all the chiefs. This led frequent raids on their neighbouring areas (Samuelson, R 1985). In a prominent raid, carried out on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1871 by one Mizo Chief, Bengkhuaia of Sailam village, at Alexandarpur of Cachar district, they killed the manager of the tea garden and abducted his six-year old daughter Mary Winchester. Then, in retaliation the British troops led by Lt. Tom Herbert Lewin came to Lushai Hills and Mary was retrieved and sent back to England in 1872 (Zatluanga 1966). The British Government could not tolerate with such constant raids carried out by the Mizo, therefore, the Lushai Hills was subjugated by the British in 1891 (Chawngsailova 2012). After annexation, northern part of Mizoram was administered as the Lushai Hills district of Assam, while southern Mizoram was part of Bengal. In 1898, the southern part was transferred from Bengal to Assam. In the administrative set up the colonial power retained the chiefs and Mizo customs including the socially stratified hereditary transfer of political power. In 1937, under Section 6 of the Scheduled District Act, the British administration consolidated executive, legislative and political power to the Deputy Commissioner and District Magistrates, with village chiefs in advisory role (Sailo, Michael 2006).

## **ROLE OF MISSIONARIES AND INTRODUCTION OF FORMAL EDUCATION IN MIZORAM**

It was the Western Missionary who enlightened the primitive Mizo, in political as well as religious matter and they are instrumental in preaching Christian religion and education (Vanlalhluna, John). The pioneer Missionaries Rev. J.H. Lorrain and Rev. F.W. Savidge arrived in Mizoram on 11<sup>th</sup> January 1894 (Rev. Liangkhaia 1976 and Lalkima, 1997). The two Missionaries learnt the Mizo dialect in a very short time and formulated the Lushai alphabet, A, AW, B. They opened a school and the Mizo learnt the alphabet with zeal and enthusiasm. The pioneer Missionaries continued to work hard in translating the Bible into Lushai



language for teaching the Mizo in the schools. The simultaneous spread of Christianity and education in Mizoram brought about a change in the society. The Mizo became cent percent Christian in a period of around fifty years. The Missionaries established many Primary Schools but not a single High School till 1945 (Lalkima 1997). The missionary activity continued with its initial vigor. It was successful in weaning many of the population to educational pursuit. In the process it created a class of people and this newly emerging class significantly influences the developments (Gopalkrishnan 1991).

The literacy rate of Mizoram stood at 91.33 per cent making it the third most literate state in the country after Kerala and Lakshadweep (The Economic times 2014). K.C. Lalvunga in his article cited "As we look back we are able to discern more clearly the changes the colonial rule had brought about. It is easy to blame the colonialism but we must remember that colonialism had brought with it a civilizing factor and Mizos are the true beneficiaries. The Mizo are now under the influence of a new way of life. Education, health care, communications, trade and commerce and government services have done tremendous works for material prosperity. In the course of time, independence came out not so much by our demand as by providence" (Lalvunga 2013).

### **FORMATION OF MIZORAM**

After India gained independence from the colonial rule, this region was granted autonomous status in 1952, where Mizo people formulated their own laws and delivered judicial decisions. The region was renamed as Mizo District within Assam State in April 1954 and in that year, the institution of hereditary chieftainship was abolished, and instead village courts/council was set up (Sailo, Michael 2006). Under the provisions of the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act 1971, the Mizo Hill District was elevated to status of Union Territory of Mizoram on January 21, 1972, with a Legislative Assembly and Mizoram Statehood Bill was passed on August 14<sup>th</sup>, 1986 (Lalneihzovi 2006).

Of all the areas that were carved out of Assam, Mizoram appeared to be the most fortunately placed in evolving itself into an internally-cohesive state because of its geographic location and distance from the Brahmaputra valley had an advantage to consolidate the people. The decision of the Lushai People to forego their own name as the appellation for the district and subsume them under the larger, non-denominational appellation of Mizo was expected to further the consolidation. The consolidation process



had faced some peculiar problems, most of them not of their own making. Identifying the predominant people as “any Mizo (Lushai) tribes”, the 1976 Act lists not merely the 37 Kuki tribes separately, though under the common denomination of “any Kuki tribes” but also Lakher (more accurately Mara), Pawi (Lai) and Hmar apart from Chakma as tribes separately recognised in Mizoram. Leaving aside the case of the Chakma’s whose very presence in Mizoram is considered, though tacitly, and affront by majority, the classification of Lakher and Pawi as scheduled tribes distinct from “any Mizo (Lushai) tribe and the granting of autonomous district councils to these two had always been resented by the majority. Indeed, the then and present Chief Minister Lal Thanhawla maintained that had he had any say when these decisions were taken, he would have opposed the creation of these autonomous district councils with tribal/clan appellations (see interview, *Interview with Chief Minister Lal Thanhawla by M.S. Prabhakara on 31.3.1992; Frontline; June 5, 1992 p. 48*). Further, the Hmars, now making ripples if not waves with an agitation led by the Hmar People Convention (HPC), though were included as a separate scheduled tribe distinct from “any Mizo (Lushai) tribe” (Lalsiamhnuna 2011).

### **BIRTH OF MIZO NATIONAL FRONT (MNF) AND UNDERGROUND MOVEMENT**

According to Vanlawma many Mizo had been nurturing a separatist feeling for a long time but kept it undercurrent. Some politically conscious Mizo had formed social organisations with an implicit separatist sentiment; the Mizo Cultural Society (1959) and the Mizo National Famine Front (1960) were such organisations. The MNF was the manifestation of the sentiment in an organised form with political overtones. It will be a far-fetched argument, however, if one thinks that the famine was the ‘only’ cause of the Mizo Independence movement, for such a serious development cannot be caused just by a passing event like the ‘Mautam’ famine. The discontentment of a large section of the Mizo population had roots deeper than in the famine conditions. The regionalism of the MNF was fundamentally based on ethnic, political, socio-economic and religious factors (Lalchungnunga 1994).

After the famine or Mautam in 1959 which lasted a few years the economic hardship of the Mizo Hills was precarious, leading the movement and formation of a Hill State in 1961 initiated by All Party Hill Leaders’ Conference (APHLC) which included both Eastern India Tribal Union and Mizo Union (MU). The movement rapidly gained popularity. At the same



time a third political force which later led to the Mizo insurgency emerged. On 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 1961, a political party called the Mizo National Front (MNF) was formed under the leadership of Laldenga, and those who were unhappy with the Mizo Union and Mizo Congress, also supported Laldenga (Burman, BK Roy). [The exact date of establishment of MNF with accuracy is a matter controversy; according to Laldenga, the date of establishment of MNF was 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 1961, while Isaac Zoliana, one of the original members of MNF stated as 24<sup>th</sup> October, 1961 and other original MNF member A. Rohnuna said 21<sup>st</sup> October and its first General Secretary, R. Vanlawma recorded it as 28<sup>th</sup> October 1961 (Vanlawma, R. Op. Cit. p. 261)].

The MNF owed its origin to a non-political organisation, the Mizo Cultural Society, through the instrumentality of Laldenga. The Cultural Society organised a procession peacefully to protest against ineffective relief measures when the famine overtook Mizoram. The occasion was the visit of Capt. William Sangma, the then Assam Minister in Charge of Tribal Areas Department in 1960. Government servants also participated in the procession. The Assam Government took it as an affront and barred Government servants from membership of the Cultural Society. Laldenga, who served as a clerk in the Mizo District Council office of that time, resigned from service and was promptly appointed Secretary of the Mizo Cultural Society. The Cultural Society was, however, ill-equipped in handling severe famine conditions whereupon the Mizo National Famine Front (MNFF) was formed in the same year with R. Dengthuama (later became a Congressman) as President and Laldenga as Secretary. The anti-famine and thus anti-Government movement was getting rapidly politicalised with the result that the MNFF was ultimately converted into a political associated under the name and style of Mizo National Front (MNF) on 28<sup>th</sup> October, 1961 with Laldenga as Chairman and Vanlalawma as Secretary. In the years that followed, the Mizo Union became ineffective and the MNF made rapid strides organizationally and politically to the point of challenging the authority of the Government of India (Dutta, Anuraadha).

Among the MNF members the extremist section within MNF advocated the use of violence to seek independence from India. A special armed wing called the Mizo National Army (MNA) was created for the purpose. The MNA consisted of eight infantry "battalions" organised on the pattern of the Indian army. One of the battalions was named after 'Joshua' of the Bible, while the rest were named after the legendary Mizo heroes: Chawngbawia,



Khuangchera, Lalvunga, Saizahawla, Taitesena, Vanapa and Zampui Manga. The Lion Brigade (Chawngbawla, Khuangchera, Saizahawla and Taitesena battalions) operated in the northern half of the district, while the Dagger Brigade (Joshua, Lalvunga, Vanapa and Zampui Manga) operated in its southern half. MNA consisted of around 2000 men, supported by another group called the Mizo National Volunteers (MNV), which comprised an equal number of irregulars (March 1966 MNF uprising).

Though a group of intellectuals came under the spell of Laldenga, the Mizo Union strongly opposed the idea of secession. This was considered as impossible by Bawichhuaka, a leading member of the Union, in as much as "We did not have the strength, the wealth; we did not have the capacity to force secession" (Barpujari 1981). Laldenga, on the other hand, had matured plans for an insurrection on large scale by carrying out anti-Indian propaganda, collecting funds and recruiting volunteers. Like the insurgent Nagas, the MNF found the rulers in neighboring East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) their host that trained the rebels besides supplying arms and ammunitions.

### **OUTBREAK OF INSURGENCY 1966**

On 1<sup>st</sup> March 1966, at 02:00 IST, the insurgents attacked the telephone exchange at Aizawl. An hour later, around 150 insurgents led by Pu Lalnundawta, attacked the Aizawl District Treasury and looted money, arms and .303ammunition. Within a few hours, the insurgents took control of all the important centres of the Mizo district, paralysing the civil administration. They also seized all the vehicles in the town. The law and order situation went beyond the control of the local Police and the small units of AR posted in the district. T S Gill, the Deputy Commissioner of the Mizo district, took shelter in the AR headquarters. The insurgents attacked the 1<sup>st</sup> AR battalion headquarters in Aizawl unsuccessfully. They also attacked the AR post at Chhimluang on the Aizawl-Silchar road, but were repulsed by the Riflemen. To stop any reinforcements from Silchar, they created several roadblocks and damaged the only bridge on the road. On 5<sup>th</sup> March, the insurgents led by Pu Hruaia plundered the Public Works Department (PWD) office in Aizawl, looting items from the Mizoram Government Office. On 11<sup>th</sup> March, the insurgents burned the houses of the senior officials of the Mizo Union (Bareh, Hamlet 2001).

On the night of 28<sup>th</sup> February, 1966, armed MNF force simultaneously attacked different Government installations in Aizawl, Lunglei, Vairengte, Chawngte, Chhimluang and other



places. The then Lunglei SDO R.V. Pillai, IAS was kidnapped by insurgents. The road to Aizawl was cut off at Vairengte. The MNF declared independence for Mizoram on 1<sup>st</sup> of March, 1966 with the declaration signed by Laldenga and sixty others (Lalninthanga P. 2010). The MNF went underground when on 2<sup>nd</sup> March; the Government of Assam declared Mizoram a 'Disturbed Area' and the Indian Armed Forces moved into the hills. Laldenga and his men escaped to East Pakistan wherefrom they carried on reprisals against their enemies whether the Vais (outsiders) or the Mizos (Barpujari 1981).

The MNF insurgents dispersed in smaller units merged with the local population and continued to carry out armed attacks against the security forces in the district. The villagers suffered from both sides as the insurgents would kill those resisting their entry into the villages while the villages suffered reprisals from the security forces in case ambushes had taken place in their vicinity (Sinha, S.P. 2008).

### **DISTURBANCE AND UNPLEASANT FALLOUTS**

The situation in Mizo hills deteriorated from bad to worse soon after Indian Army took over control of the District. The formidable 'Operation Security' adopted by Indian Security forces was brutal, obnoxious and ruthless. The Army rounded up all men folk of the villages, they were kicked, beaten, trampled upon and confined for the night, houses were broken into and women were raped (Chawngsailova, 2012).

A few connected line of events were also found, the MNF commander Lt. Col. Laimana, who was suspected of being a government informant, was assassinated on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1966, (Bareh, Hamlet 2001). On the other hand branded as hostiles by the army, who could make no distinction between a loyal and rebel, the Mizos were subjected to arrest, investigation, incarceration and firing apart from kidnapping and brutal massacres, anvil and hammer, in the hands of the extremists in the event of being least suspected as informants or anti-MNF. Tired of two-fold tyrannies many left their homes and took shelter in Manipur, Cachar and Khashi Hills (Barpujari 1981).

The 1966, March disturbance is known even to the outside world for its dimension and character. Curfew became a popular Mizo word, in bigger towns like Aizawl and Lunglei. Imposition of Curfew in Aizawl was most severe in the beginning of 1975, when the IGP G.S. Arya, IPS and his two colleagues L.B. Sewa IPS, DIG and Panchepagesam, SP, CID were gunned down brutally while conferring together in IGP's office room. This ghastly incident



occurred on 13.1.75 around 4.00 pm. Again in mid June, 1979, when a Bengali P.W.D., S.D.O. was murdered and the Silchar people suddenly turning hostile\* and falling upon an act of revenge and in 1982, when the newly elected MLA (from Phuldungsei Constituency in a bye-election, on P.C. ticket) Zadinga and Editor of "Chhawrpial" daily, Z.A. Kapmawia were murdered. He was shot at the entrance of his own residence at Shivaji Tilla and subsequently died in hospital. The underground elements must have entertained deep grudge against these two in matters of politics. On account of such happening night curfew clamped down heavily from dusk till 5 am. The declaration of Mizoram as 'Disturbed Area' in 1966 continued till 1983(Lalninthanga 2010).

The Mizo Union leaders blamed the MNF for the loss of civilian life, and condemned the armed insurrection. The MNF accused the Indian Government of "indiscriminate bombing on civilian population" during the airstrikes in Aizawl (Biswas P. and Thomas J. 2006). The *Peace Accord* also brings distrust against the MNF leadership; the inspiring speech of Laldenga was not forgotten especially by the relatives of the volunteers killed during insurgency. They asserted that the Accord has not brought any special significant development for the Mizos and a mere statehood is not worth the blood that had been shed; it might be achieved long back without any bloodshed had there been no insurgency (Chawngsailova, 2012).

### **USE OF AIR FORCE AND GROUPING OF VILLAGES**

The MNF uprising had its own uniqueness, said MNF President Zoramthanga, on the occasion of celebration of 50 years of declaration on Mizo independence across the state. He said 'it was a movement in which the parent government attacked its adopted citizens with bombs and rocket launcher. It was also unique as it was the only movement in the history of India and Asia wherein the government resorted to grouping of people' (The Mizoram Post 2016).

In the morning of 5<sup>th</sup> March 1966, air force planes were bombing MNF positions at Tuikhuahtlang, and a huge fire broke out in Bara Bazar (Chhawnthanga, Mission Veng). At around 10 am, the air force plane flew overhead and started shooting at anything at sight, many houses went up in flames, and the entire row of shops at Khatla was reduced to ashes (C. Lalpara, Venghnuai) [The Frontier Despatch 2016]. At 11.30 am the air force attacked Aizawl city with heavy machine gun fire. On March 6, it was intensified and incendiary



bombs were dropped killing innocents and destroying four localities of the city viz. Republic Veng, Hmeichche Veng, Dawrpui Veng and Chhinga Veng. Peoples left their homes and fled into the hills in panic. The Mizo National Army (MNA) melted away into sorrowing gorges, forests and hills to camp in Burma and the then East Pakistan.

Till the 1980s the Indian military stoutly denied the use of air strikes in Mizoram in 1966. In 1967, the Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA) was in force in Mizoram. That year the eastern army top brass, led by Lt. General Maneckshaw, and government decided to implement the another terrible thing called 'regrouping of villages.' The road coming from Silchar and going till the end of states boundary, on both the sides of this road were vast tracts of forests, hills, ravines dotted with hundreds of villages. The military plan was to bring all the villages and put in a cluster along the side of this road. This was termed as Protected and Progressive Villages (PPVs). In the process, the army told the villagers to take whatever they could and the rest to burn down. Elders signed consent papers at gunpoint. They marched in a column guarded by the military to their designated PPVs. Out of the total 764 villages, 516 were evacuated and squeezed into 110 PPVs. Only 138 villages were left untouched. In the Aizawl area, about 95 percent of the rural population was herded into PPVs. The Indian army might be imitating from the British who regrouped villages during the Boer war in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in Malaya, where they interned Chinese in special camps and in Kenya where villages were uprooted to crush the Mau Mau revolt. The first PPVs were dismantled in 1971, but the last ones continued for another eight years (Barman Abheek, 2013). Grouping of villages was in fact, a horrible nightmare to the Mizo people as it only brought untold sufferings and miseries to the general public due to the ruination of their traditional economy (Chawngsailova, 2012).

### **A TOUGH LIFE AT PPVs**

In the PPVs each resident was numbered and tagged, going and coming was strictly regulated and rations were limited. In the confines of PPVs, tribal conventions broke down. On the other hand, in the scramble of scarce resources, theft, murder and alcoholism became widespread. It destroyed the Mizos' practice of jhum, or shifting cultivation. Besides the continuation of insurgency and disturbances, large number of crimes took place, such as murders, kidnapping, and abducting, dacoity, robbery, burglary, riots, criminal breach of trust, cheating, hurt, rape, offences under Armed Act, War against State, and other offences



were reported during 1966, 67, and 69 (Lalnehzovi 2006). The Security Forces took a lot of time for regular checking and identification and as such reduced working hours and did not allow them to spend night time in the agro-field. The traditional economic system was totally hindered and the villagers could hardly produce sufficient food-grains even for their own living. In such a situation people had to go to the Army camp (sometimes by compulsion) as daily labourers to earn some money (Chawngsailova, 2012).

### **ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN PEACE DIALOGUE**

The Church, not being politically biased, was *the only voice* that could be heard as civil administration as the law and order situation had completely collapsed. A *peace committee* and a *citizens' committee* were formed by the church leaders which acted as mediators between the government and the undergrounds to promote relationship between the people and the security forces (Chawngsailova, 2012). Those who strove hard to bring peace in Mizoram were the leaders from the Baptist and Presbyterian Churches in the south and north of Mizoram respectively. One of them was Reverend Zairema who ventured out the MNF leaders in their hideouts in a bid to bring peace talks between MNF and the Govt. of India taking a great risk, sometimes, of his own life. In 1983 there was an abrupt termination of dialogue between the MNF and the Govt. of India, much to the dismay of the Mizo people. The various Church leaders met together and passed a resolution to resume peace dialogue. Among the active church leaders was Rev. V.L.Rawna, Seventh Day Adventist Pastor, he went to London to met Laldenga as reported by some newspapers. It was also reported that Laldenga advised him to continue his efforts to bring peace in Mizoram (Lalninthanga 2010).

### **LALDENGA'S CONCEPT OF FREEDOM**

Laldenga pointed out that the Mizos had enjoyed sovereign status before the advent of the British government in Mizoram (Vanlalmawia 2013). He said the Mizos in India were treated as a poor clan and then left in a state of starvation at all times. Being kicked, whipped, tortured and imprisoned are their daily ordeal of life. They cannot live in dignity for they are disdainfully looked down upon with contemptuous eyes; they are despised because of their Mongolian facial structure and appearance for which they cannot help themselves.

Laldenga ceased to envisage freedom not only on all political planes, but also as social, economic, cultural, spiritual as well as national. He maintained that true freedom is not



merely political but must also be economic, cultural and spiritual, only then can a man grow and fulfill his destiny. The signing of the Mizo Accord signified that Mizoram had set its first step towards freedom (Vanlalmawia 2013).

### **MIZORAM THE LAND OF PEACE BUT CLAMOURS FOR PROGRESS**

The Mizo Peace Accord has worked splendidly well in bringing back lasting peace to the state. The chapter of insurgency finally came to a close with the signing of the Mizoram Peace Accord on June 30, 1986 between the underground government of the Mizo National Front and the Government of India. The accord safeguarded the time bound religious and social practices of the Mizos. No act of Parliament in respect of these matters would apply to Mizoram without the consent of the State Assembly (Anurag K. 2011). Termed as the most successful peace accord with any insurgent group in the country, peace accord tested success mainly because the MNF complied with all the requirements of the Accord.

Mizoram after peace has its own problem of socio-economic, unemployment and infrastructure development. To solve burgeoning unemployment problem of the state Mizo Zirlai Pawl (Mizo Students Union) demanding to establish professional educational institutions, better air and road connectivity for rapid development of the state. Lack of opportunities for employment and professional educational institutions back home have driven thousands of young Mizo women and men to big cities outside thereby triggering flight of huge amount of money from the cash-starved state every year. Drug abuse has become a serious problem and the prohibition has turned out to be total failure calling for rethinking on part of the government. Unless rapid strides are made on the path of development and growth, the prevailing peace may turn uneasy in days to come.

### **FISCAL CONDITION**

The dismal state finances has attracted ban not only on creation of new jobs but also on filling up of vacant posts in the state government sector. The State Government continues to largely depend on devolution from the Central Government, as such the State's fiscal health depends on the terms of devolution of resources from the Central Government as recommended by the successive Finance Commission from time to time. At the same time, the revenue and expenditure policy of the State Government also have substantial impact on the fiscal position of the State government, especially the expenditure policy (Mizoram Economic Survey 2014-15).



In the present dismal economic scenario of the state, the political parties have been blaming each other. The present Chief Minister, Lal Thanhawla, said the people of Mizoram should be economically self reliance than living at the mercy of others. On the other hand MNF President Zoramthanga said, 'It is the biggest enemy of Mizo Nationalism to live with envy of Delhi Money. He added it was shameful for a 29 year old state to look up to Delhi for money. According to Lalsawta, Finance Minister, on presenting the annual budget for the fiscal 2016-17 in the assembly said the total Revenue Receipt of the state is estimated at Rs. 7,672.48 crore out of which the state's own Revenue Receipt is estimated to be Rs. 610.25 crore which is on 7.95 percent of the total revenue (The Mizoram Post 2016).

Relating to the raising gap between the rich and the poor in the state, PRISM (People's Right to Information and Development Implementing Society of Mizoram), expressed great concern about the increasing number of BPL families by 8.7 percent in 2012-13 (The Newslink 2016). Some of the YMA leaders opine that unless there is massive central assistance Mizoram government which have no resources of its own cannot finance the much needed capital to build roads and to improve connectivity and power supply scenario which have been major deterrent for investment from outside. It has been insisting the Chief Minister to seek special central assistance to improve basic infrastructure in the state so that the State can be put on the fast track of development exploiting the peaceful situation.

### **PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT: EMERGING EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

Peace has an economic value for progress and development. A hard earn peace brings progress and attracts many educational institutions for the state (provision of establishment of separate University and a High Court included in Memorandum of Settlement, or Mizoram Accord, 1986). Other than state educational institutions many of the centrally sponsored professional and educational institutions of repute has been coming up in the state viz. Mizoram University, The Regional Institute of Paramedical & Nursing Sciences (RIPANS), Central Agricultural University (CAU), National Institute of Technology (NIT), National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NEILIT), Sainik School and Horticulture College, providing a better scope of higher and professional education within the state. In the field of games and sports Mizoram excels many states in India and brings laurels from national and international events.



Above all, the need of the hour is development of infrastructure to uplift the financial and economic conditions of Mizoram and other North Eastern Region states. Timely completion of Kaladan Multi-modal Transit Transport Project, extension of railway up to Lawngtlai and to make use of available waterways are other areas of importance pointed out by the Chief Minister Lalthanhawla on the occasion of 8<sup>th</sup> Delhi Dialogue on Look East Policy by representatives of Association of South East Asian Nation (ASIAN) (The Mizoram Post 2016). Let Mizoram Peace Accord be an example of for all other armed groups in the country to bring development of this great nation.

## NOTES

1. *Laldenga was born on 11 June 1927 in village Pukpui in the Mizo district of Assam (now in the Lunglei district of Mizoram). He joined the Indian Army and served up to Havildar. He resigned from the army and joined civil service as Accounts Clerk under Government of Assam in Aizawl. Laldenga joined a voluntary organisation called Mizo Cultural Society, formed in 1955, as its Secretary.*
2. *Young Lushai Association (YLA) was formed in 1935 and the name was changed to Young Mizo Association (YMA) in 1947, which is still an important institution in Mizoram.*
3. *As per unofficial but authentic reports, many lives of Mizo passengers were also saved by the Manipuri villagers before entering Silchar town while coming back from Shillong, their vehicles, were stopped by these villagers and provided them to shelter till the riot against the Mizos was over inside the Silchar town.\**

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